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PROFESSOR CALKINS ON MENTAL ARRANGEMENT.[1]

By I. MADISON BENTLEY.

In a recent note (*Philosophical Review*, XI, 553), Professor Calkins makes reference to my article on "the Psychology of Mental Arrangement" in the April number of this *Journal* (XII, 269). The note calls for the following explanatory remarks. (1) It is true that I did not take account of Münsterberg's *Wertqualitaeten* or Ebbinghaus's *allgemeine Eigenschaften*; but neither did I discuss the views of Wundt or of Spencer or of James. My primary object in the article was to trace a line of discussion that had run through the magazine literature during the last twelve years—a discussion that was fairly coherent and logical. Since I made no attempt to give an account of the text-books and of the systematic treatises, the limitations of the article seemed obvious and I did not think it necessary to point them out. I referred to Stout because he had proposed an English term to cover the alleged formal elements; a term that has had some influence on English terminology (see, *e. g.*, Baldwin's Dict. of Philos. and Psych.). (2) If I sounded a warning against the hasty recognition of 'form qualities' and 'funded contents,' I should like to make the warning twice as emphatic against the illegitimate use of relations. Professor Calkins's argument for 'relational elements' is that the expression "suggests that 'dependent' character of these experiences which Cornelius marks by naming them the 'attributes' of conscious complexes." But if it is the attributive characteristic that is peculiar to the relational element, one can but wonder why Professor Calkins has made the usual attributes of sensation independent elements, and has created separate classes for 'attributive' and 'relational' elements, (see her *Introduction to Psychology* pages 105 and 113). Moreover, dependence is characteristic—both in the physical and the mental world—of other things than relations. A relation is a single type of dependence. The height of the mercury column depends upon temperature, feeling depends upon intensity of sensation, æsthetical appreciation upon a complex of processes, but no one of these dependent terms can properly be called a relation. It might, indeed, be said that, were every

[1]This note should have appeared in the October *Journal*, but was omitted by mistake. E. B. T.

dependent element a 'relational' element, all consciousness would be relational; for consciousness depends invariably both upon nervous processes and upon previous conscious experience. "Divorced from Spencer's associationist interpretation," and from the notion that mind must contain things and relations because it knows a world of related things, the term becomes, it seems to me, void of contents. The word 'funding' is itself much more significant and much less misleading. (3) Since I did not discuss the experiences of 'oneness,' of 'likeness' and of 'difference,' and since I did not commit myself to two classes of elements—"sensational and affective phenomena,"—I can hardly be held responsible for my critic's inference that I should deny the existence of a unique factor in these experiences; though I may say at once, that I should gravely question the propriety of naming such a factor when found a relational element. I may add that I did not go so far, either, as to assert that some factor analogous to funded contents could, in every instance, be dispensed with. My contention was that "the hypothesis of distinctive and unique conscious structures which characterize mental complexes is to be entertained with caution if not with suspicion," and that "their intemperate use in certain of the treatises that we have discussed is both unnecessary and indefensible." There was, moreover, a plea entered for a clearer comprehension of analysis and, also, for the rejection of the atomic view of mind—a view which, I am convinced, is really at the core of the theory of relational elements. As to the type of complexes which the article did bring under discussion—the type represented by figures and melodies—there seems to be no difference of opinion. Professor Calkins says: "nor does direct introspection disclose the presence of specific form-qualities as distinctive of particular melodies or figures." (4) It is possible that Professor Calkins has overinterpreted the proposed 'pattern' or 'plan of arrangement' which was explained as "nothing but the elements taken together." It is precisely the introduction into mental synthesis of any sort of adhesive material that the 'arrangement' theory is intended to preclude. On the assumption that an element is a concrete, self-contained entity,—a common enough artifact of analysis,—the notion of such a 'plan' would be foolish; on the assumption of the type of analysis for which the article contended, the notion can hardly be termed either "vague" or "ambiguous."